

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Objections to the Drawings

The Examiner objected to the drawing 3A since the specification referred to the figure as "prior art" but figure did not include a legend such as "Prior Art". The specification has been amended herein to remove the reference to "prior art" therein. Accordingly it is submitted that the Examiner's objection to the specification has been overcome.

Claims Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Accordingly claims 1-21 have been canceled and new claims 22-41 have been added. In view of the amendments to the claims it is submitted that the Examiner's rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph have been rendered moot.

Claims Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Wicks. Claims 1-21 have been canceled. To the extent that the Examiner's rejections may be applicable to new claims 22-41 the references are discussed below.

The present invention is directed to a paper web that is passed through a press nip, while passing through the nip of after it, the web adheres to the surface of a transfer belt by means of adhesion. The transfer belt is impervious to liquid/gas while the web is on the surface of the belt and thermal energy is introduced to the web.

Wicks discloses the use of a transfer belt. However, Wicks teachings does not disclose that the thermal energy is substantially supplied to the web while it is on the surface of the same transfer belt. The web in Wicks is passed (Figures 2 and 4) onto a smooth-surfaced roll 45/83, which does not indicate any heating or a warm roll surface.

Conversely, the present invention discloses that thermal energy is supplied to the web in a substantial amount, whereby the web also dries while it is on the belt. This demands several hot drying cylinders, impingement units or another source of heat along the path of the belt. This exemplifies the difference between Applicant's invention and Wicks.

The Office Action contends that the arrangement in Wicks of Figure 2 includes a second transfer belt which runs from roll 36 through press nips towards and past cylinders 47. Applicant asserts that there is apparently no support is found for this contention in Figure 2 nor in the text of Wicks. A person of ordinary skill in the art would consider this type of arrangement nonsensical. Perhaps the Office Action was referring to the mention of "additional supporting *felts*" (emphasis added) from Wicks, column 3, lines 57-59.

In Wicks, if there were another transfer belt between 36 and 47, the arrangement would involve two impervious belts in a press nip (and a paper web between them) and it would not be possible to remove any liquid from the web, or at least the liquid would be between the belts wetting the web. This amounts to an inoperable arrangement. Moreover, it is clear from the description that the web is caused to adhere to roll 45 from the belt 40. If Figure 2 comprised a second belt on the lower side as contended by the Office Action, the web would never come into contact with the roll 45, but instead would be at this point on the surface of the second transfer belt.

Additionally, Wicks et al. teaches a closed draw applying a transfer belt from a press to a dryer section and the transfer of a web from the transfer belt onto a transfer roll, from which it is transferred onto "additional felts." (Column 3, lines 50-59 and Column 4, lines 44-51).

Wicks does not teach the embodiments in Figures 4-6 of the present invention. These figures disclose that the transfer belt does not pass through a press nip, but thermal energy is supplied to the web situated on the belt from drying cylinders. Wicks does not teach these features of the present invention.



Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and arguments presented above it is submitted that the Examiner's rejections have been overcome and should be removed.

Should any changes to the claims and/or specification be deemed necessary to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned to discuss the same.

In the event that any fee is required for the entry of this amendment the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge said fee to Deposit Account No. 50-0518 in the name of Steinberg & Raskin, P.C.

An early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

STEINBERG & RASKIN, P.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M G Raskin".

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1/1/02
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